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The Emergency Relief Committee of Fitchburg, 1931 - 1934

Edmund B. Thomas, Jr.

The Great Depression conjures up images of the stock market collapse, soup kitchens, and faceless men with turned up collars warming themselves before fires in steel drums. One sees farmers struggling against falling prices, droughts, and, later on, dust storms. Except for these farmers, however, the Great Depression seems concentrated in the giant cities, in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia. Boston rarely appears in these accounts and the smaller cities of Massachusetts never. Yet President Hoover's insistence that relief "was the responsibility of local government and that the American people must "maintain the spirit of charity and mutual self-help through voluntary giving" was as relevant a concept for the smallest towns as for the greatest cities. This paper seeks to explore how one community, Fitchburg, attempted to cope with the problems of the Great Depression through voluntary charities and local public relief efforts. It will deal especially with the Emergency Relief Committee of Fitchburg, a local charitable organization created in response to the President's Organization on Unemployment Relief (POUR) which was established by Herbert Hoover in October of 1931 and was directed by Walter Gifford, president of American Telephone and Telegraph.¹

Before one can understand these efforts, a little background into the history and economy of Fitchburg is necessary. Fitchburg was an industrial city with 41,029 inhabitants in 1920. In that year, it had 114 companies employing 9,834 wage earners. Fitchburg had a well balanced industrial economy producing everything from cotton textiles to steam boilers, including lathes, saws, paper, trucks, revolvers, and woolen goods. Like most Massachusetts cities, it was largely composed of immigrants and the children of immigrants: French-Canadians, Finns, Irish, Italians, and Englishmen made up the bulk of the population. The local industrial economy, however, started to decline in the early 1920s. The machine shops never recovered from the post World War I depression. During the war, U.S. Government contracts led the twenty-two Fitchburg machine shops and foundries to employ over 2,000 workers. The mean employment in these plants declined to under 675 during the 1920s and the number of plants sank to thirteen. The causes of this industrial decline are outside the scope of this paper but probably are a result of Fitchburg's having

older factories which were geared to producing steam-powered engines at a time when the growth part of this industry was in gasoline-powered vehicles and electrically powered home appliances.²

Cotton textiles were the other weak spot in the local economy of the 1920s. The boom years of World War I saw the six cotton textile companies employing over 3,000 workers. Employment declined to around 2,600 workers from 1921 to 1926. Southern competition, the fact that Fitchburg possessed older factories with less efficient machinery, and changing consumer tastes which led to a vastly reduced demand for gingham, a local specialty, were the main causes for the collapse of this industry. One of the mills closed in 1926 and three more followed in early 1928. Only two mills survived into the 1930s, one a pioneer in spun rayon and the other a manufacturer of sail cloth and canvas coverings. While the mean industrial employment in Fitchburg in the 1920s was 8,250, by 1928 the actual employment had slipped to 6,448. Industrial employment in 1928 was thus only 78.2 percent of the average employment of the decade and only 60 percent of World War I employment levels. Since the population of Fitchburg declined only .8 percent (331 people) between 1920 and 1930, the drop in industrial employment represents true unemployment rather than outward migration from the area. Depending on whether one compares 1928 employment with the highs of World War I or the average for the 1920s, either 21.8 percent or 40 percent of Fitchburg's industrial workers were out of work in the "boom" year of 1928. The national depression which started in 1929 further aggravated conditions locally so that average industrial employment was only 5,089 in 1931 and 4,256 at its nadir in 1932. By late 1931, therefore, local industrial unemployment can be calculated at 38.3 percent using the mean employment of the 1920s or 52.6 percent compared with the golden days of World War I. The morbid statistics for 1932 produce unemployment rates of 48.4 percent and over 60 percent depending on the basis for comparison. However one wishes to rearrange the statistics, Fitchburg was an economic disaster area by 1931-32.³

The initial impetus for an economic relief committee in Fitchburg came from a little theater group which pledged the funds received from a benefit performance towards aiding the unemployed. This offer, combined with national publicity on the subject, led Mayor Joseph N. Carriere to call a public meeting on October 23 to establish a "workshop plan of raising funds for the unemployed." About 150 people attended this meeting and a "blue Ribbon" committee of 23 was established to collect the funds and manage the program. The goals of this organization were to alleviate "the suffering and hardship" which "this winter promises to be acute," to "re-establish faith in our industries and in our future," and finally to "safeguard the social order." The meeting wished to stress to the community that a new class of needy had emerged, unemployed individuals who had never been on relief before but who were rapidly running out of funds.⁴

Within a week, the executive committee had decided against a public drive for funds and in favor of weekly contributions from those with permanent employment. They recommended that workers earning under \$50 a week should contribute one percent of their paychecks, those earning \$50 to \$100 a

week should give one and a half percent, and the fortunate few who earned over \$100 a week should give two percent of their salaries. These funds were to be collected by employers and sent to the treasurer. The committee agreed with President Hoover that they were "against the dole system." Instead, they intended to give the money raised to the city, which would hire the unemployed to do useful tasks around the city. This system of work relief, it was believed, would maintain self-respect among the unemployed, make the employed feel better about giving "relief," and avoid duplication of effort since all funds were essentially channeled through the same office. A second thrust of the same plan called for an employment or labor bureau to be established at City Hall. This bureau would register heads of families who needed employment and would also urge working citizens to come to the bureau and hire the unemployed to do odd jobs around their homes. It was hoped that many citizens would use this service so a maximum number of unemployed people could be helped by the program.⁵

The activities of the Emergency Relief Committee, as it was officially known, were not unknown to Fitchburg city government in late 1931. Public works programs such as road building and cutting wood at the municipal wood yard were common in America and had been recommended by the Public Welfare Department in 1928. Fitchburg *City Documents* for 1929 and 1930 indicated that the city played a small role in gaining employment for the jobless. In 1931, before the Emergency Relief Committee was organized, the Soldiers' Relief Department in Fitchburg started the practice of requiring the veterans to cut cord wood for their relief checks. Over 430 cords of wood were cut and delivered to city agencies that year. In brief, work relief was not an unusual concept to the citizens of Fitchburg in late 1931. If the concept of work relief was not new in 1931, the need for outside assistance in coping with the mounting burden of unemployed, often desperate individuals was becoming acute. In 1930, 124 men were given Soldiers' Relief while the "outside poor," called general welfare today, amounted to 743 families (2,762 people including dependents). The number on Soldiers' Relief almost doubled to 241 cases in 1931 while the "outside poor" rose to 931 families with 3,560 people. These 1931 figures do not include assistance given by the city to the aged or to mothers with dependent children, both of which were covered under separate, state-mandated programs. These groups, and especially the "outside poor," were truly needy since no one could qualify for relief if he or she owned real property or a car or if the welfare applicant possessed either a bank account or a telephone. The existence of wealthier relatives was also sufficient to exclude one from public assistance.⁶

The campaign to help the unemployed in Fitchburg started off sharply with full page ads donated by the Fitchburg *Sentinel* and editorials calling for self-sacrifice in the war against unemployment which, it was hoped, would be fought as valiantly as had been World War I. Besides the little theater benefit, Fitchburg High School pledged all the funds from the Athol football game, and the Fitchburg theater donated its auditorium and orchestra for a benefit performance. The jobless, too, demonstrated their willingness to cooperate as 321 registered with the employment bureau in City Hall on the first day of its operation. The first employees group to pledge contributions to the Emergency Relief Committee was the Fitchburg Teachers Association. Other municipal

employees soon followed. The school children of Fitchburg went door-to-door selling tickets to the benefit football game and social organizations started to donate funds to the campaign. The city of Fitchburg soon publicized a series of programs on which to use the unemployed, hoping that concrete knowledge of how the money would be used might help persuade the citizenry to be generous in their contributions. By November 20, in the opinion of Emergency Relief Committee Chairman Norman Harrower, nothing was lacking for the complete success of this project except pledges or cash donations of \$75,000.⁷

On November 25, 1931, Howard O. Hunter, regional director of POUR, came to Fitchburg to speak to the Council of Social Agencies. His speech, which could almost be considered a campaign pep talk insisted that

Corporate wealth and capital must be depended upon to share in a very large measure the burden of providing funds to give relief work to unemployed. The steady wage earner must make his weekly contribution, too, but it is only through large gifts from the other groups that the problem can be met in a substantial scale.⁸

This advice was essentially correct. Workers earning \$30 a week, to use a figure often mentioned in the campaign, would be asked to donate only thirty cents a week. It took eleven weeks for that wage earner to contribute a single day's pay for an unemployed person at the suggested forty cents an hour wage rate. Hunter went on to note that while he considered private relief better than government efforts and work relief "merely artificially created jobs," the fact remained that in Massachusetts 76 percent of all relief came from tax funds. Hopefully, groups like Fitchburg's Emergency Relief Committee could reduce that percentage.⁹

But pep talks and slogans were not doing their job. The same issue of the *Sentinel* which reported Hunter's speech also noted that the Emergency Relief Committee had obtained only a quarter of the necessary funds. The Committee hoped to employ 300 heads of households through the winter months. This goal would help less than half the men registered for work but even that seemed unattainable. New editorials urged working women to contribute to the fund while those at home should both economize and prod their husbands to do more. "Don't shirk your responsibilities" became the byword of the campaign. It was not really a matter of shirking responsibility, however. Fitchburg unemployment levels were rapidly climbing towards fifty percent and many of those with jobs were only employed two days a week. Norman Harrower admitted that the underemployed could not be expected to contribute to the campaign. Basically, the ranks of the fully employed were too thin to support the others.¹⁰

Slowly, almost agonizingly, the newspaper reported the daily intake of funds. The weekly payroll available was calculated at \$1165.03 on December 2, sufficient to hire 72 men for a five day week. On December 4, the payroll available had climbed to \$1306.17 and now 81 men could be hired. The public projects were fully described in the papers so all would know which fire station would be painted, where a new baseball field would be constructed, and what roads would be upgraded. Money continued to dribble in. By December 8, the

director of the fund proudly announced that there were now enough funds to pay half the projected weekly payroll of \$3,000. Yet only 104 men were actually employed. The committee was in a dilemma over spending the money. On the one hand, they wanted a maximum number working before Christmas so that it would not be a dismal one for either the children or the downtown merchants. On the other hand, the cold depressing winter was still around the corner and it was during the first three months of the year that personal suffering would be at its greatest.¹¹

On December 16, the Emergency Relief Committee, with \$43,000 in pledges, decided to take a major gamble. Funds were on hand to hire 140 men for the ensuing week but they decided to add an additional 30 men to the work force so they could get a full week of employment before Christmas. Unless cash donations poured in, however, the committee would not be able to meet its payroll. Besides the usual pleas for funds, the committee tried to shame the citizenry into contributing during this crucial week. Complete lists of all contributors to the fund were published so everyone could see and note who was doing his fair share. An editorial compared Fitchburg to Waterbury, Connecticut, with the same intent. Both cities had adopted essentially the same program, it noted, but Waterbury had raised almost \$6 per person while Fitchburg barely pledged \$1 per capita. The Emergency Relief Committee also released the figures on its efforts, showing that while 1,200 had registered with the labor bureau, only 171 men, 1,032 people including dependents, were currently being aided. It further published its ledger on the front page of the *Sentinel* to show that \$25,152.97 had been paid out to date and all but \$31.69 of that amount had gone into pay envelopes.¹²

This hard sell approach was only moderately successful. It did raise pledges of almost \$5,000 in ten days, but not hard cash. The *Sentinel* noted that one citizen generously picked up the payroll for the extra 32 men so they could be paid before Christmas. Unfortunately, all 32 would be promptly laid off unless additional funds came from somewhere. The campaign to obtain odd jobs in the private sector was equally depressing. Up to December 29, only 21 people had been given jobs and these jobs lasted an average of only three days. Mayor Carriere expressed the sense of gloom and frustration in the Emergency Relief Committee when, in his inaugural address to the city on January 4, 1932, he declared:

It has been a source of disappointment to me that there has not been a more widespread response to the appeal made by the relief committee, the very excellent work of which, during the past few weeks, ought to convince the public that methods employed are the best insurance against the dole system, increased taxation, and other burdens.¹³

After Christmas, money came to the committee in ever decreasing amounts. Less than \$2,000 was received during the entire month of January. The Public Works Department similarly was running out of small projects for the relief crews. Commissioner Joseph M. Peirce wanted to divert Punch Brook, a stream which ran through the middle of downtown Fitchburg, into underground pipes

but the \$25,000 cost was too excessive for the cost conscious City Council to approve. Everything was running out except the number of jobless. Before the end of January, over 1,500 unemployed were registered with the labor bureau.¹⁴ Mayor Carriere, a "pay-as-you-go" advocate, presented more bad news to the city when he noted in January that another \$375,000 had to be cut from the next city budget at a time when welfare demands alone were accounting for more than a quarter of all city expenditures. Individual donations and new employee contributions also ceased to come in. Only the continuing benefit performances raised additional funds for the relief committee. The Rotary Club raised \$200 by holding a benefit "poverty" party, basketball games were held, and fraternal organizations produced plays. Slowly, the committee funds crept up to \$51,500.¹⁵

Obviously, with the needs increasing each month and with both the mayor and the city banks firmly opposed to work relief paid for with tax funds, a new way of raising money had to be developed. The Emergency Relief Committee, therefore, decided to request a year's membership in the Fitchburg Community Chest. The eleven member agencies had raised \$76,650 in 1931 and another \$51,500 had been obtained by the relief committee. It was hoped that by combining the two drives, \$150,000 could be raised and the full three hundred families aided during 1932-33. A financial accounting of the Emergency Relief Committee in June of 1932, made just prior to the first allocation of funds by the Fitchburg Community Chest for 1932-33, shows that during its first seven and a half months of independent existence, the fund actually paid out \$49,067.49 in wages to 315 individuals who were the principal means of support for over 2,000 people in the city. These individuals worked 117,527 hours painting fire stations and schools, refurbishing parks and playgrounds, and constructing or upgrading roads and sewers throughout the city. The Emergency Relief Committee sought to pay its help forty cents an hour and the actual figures calculate out to a slightly higher rate of pay. The various reports show fluctuations in the number employed from 50 to 250 in any given week. On the average, a head of household earned \$155.77 to help meet his family's needs during the period from November of 1931 to June of 1932. Additionally, odd jobs were found for 145 men but the total pay earned was a meager \$750 or slightly over \$5 a job. These figures offered no great reason for enthusiasm but since they were additional funds to help the needy poor, anything was better than nothing.¹⁶

Financial conditions in the city of Fitchburg made the Community Chest appeal in April of 1932 less than an overwhelming success. Only \$131,833.67 was raised so cuts in excess of \$25,000 had to be made in the Community Chest budget. At the May 17 budget committee meeting of the Community Chest, it was decided that the Emergency Relief Committee would suffer virtually all of those cuts and was given only \$50,495.27 for the ensuing year. Even that figure was cut to \$45,000 due to an excessive shrinkage of Community Chest pledges during 1932-33.¹⁷

With the Community Chest handling the funding, the newspapers published virtually nothing on the operations of 1932-33. One report, dated April 17, 1933 and timed to promote the 1933-34 fund drive of the Community Chest,

reveals that 436 heads of families representing a total of 2,834 people were given 153,541 hours of work. The average hourly wage dropped to 29.3 cents an hour and the average yearly income was a scant \$103.45 per family. Over half of the funds were expended in the three winter months when the need was greatest but the actual number employed at any given time is unknown. Additionally, the labor bureau was able to find odd jobs for 256 people and permanent jobs for eight.¹⁸ As the Community Chest of Fitchburg prepared its budget for 1933-34, it offered the Emergency Relief Committee a scant \$25,000, and that was conditional on the fund raising \$100,000 for 1933-34. Norman Harrower, chairman of the relief committee, countered by requesting a grant of \$12,000 from the Community Chest to carry the committee into October with permission to raise funds separately at that time. Admitting that \$12,000 was totally inadequate, Harrower insisted that the need "depends on business and financial recovery" and with the New Deal just underway in Washington, no one could accurately forecast the demands six months hence.¹⁹

The Community Chest agreed to Harrower's request at its April 4 meeting and allotted \$2,000 a month to the Emergency Relief Committee up through September, 1933. At that time, in accordance with plans made in March and taking the economic condition of the city into account, the relief committee made a public appeal for \$18,000 so that the fifty neediest families could be aided for six months. This renewed campaign stressed equally the needs of the unemployed and the benefits that the city had received from the Emergency Relief Committee. Harrower pointed with pride to the cement swimming pool on Caldwell Street, to the repairs and improvement at the sewerage plant, the fifteen bridges recently repainted, and the improvements at city parks and playgrounds. Fitchburg had received from the relief efforts \$75,000 worth of public improvements since November of 1931, Harrower insisted, and over half of it would have had to be done anyway. The drive for public funding led naturally to a higher degree of public visibility by the committee. The committee reported, for example, that in the week ending September 30, forty-eight men were employed. Only one individual worked a full five day week, one worked four days, sixteen worked three days, twenty-five for two, and five for only a single day. Of the 48 men hired, 32 were property owners and, as such, ineligible for relief funds. By October 18, the Emergency Relief Committee drive had obtained pledges of \$4399 from 84 donations. Seeking to further improve its public image, the committee donated \$900 worth of wages unloading 33 freight cars loaded with surplus flour, a gift of the American Red Cross. Interestingly, while the Emergency Relief Committee records showed 2,232 unemployed families in Fitchburg, 3,290 families qualified for the surplus flour allotments.²⁰

Remembering the \$1600 raised by the 1931 benefit football game, Fitchburg High School again volunteered its services for a charitable effort. The Chicopee High game on November 25 was to be a benefit for the jobless of Fitchburg and the school children again were sent door-to-door selling tickets. Over 3,300 tickets to this game were sold, which raised \$635.95 for the Emergency Relief Fund. Along with other fund raising efforts, some \$6500 was raised by December 13, 1933. Although the 1933 fund drive had raised only slightly more than a third of its goal, city officials and committee members could afford to

relax their efforts. F.D.R.'s New Deal was underway and the Civil Works Administration had granted Fitchburg \$133,800 in November to be spent during the winter of 1933-34. Plans drafted on November 23 by local administrator Daniel J. Whooley indicate that 747 men were scheduled to work on nine different city projects. With half of the C.W.A. positions coming from the relief rolls and the other half from the ranks of the general unemployed, the unemployment problem in Fitchburg was suddenly and significantly reduced.²¹

The initial estimates on C.W.A. employment proved to be conservative. By December 11, some 1,100 Fitchburg citizens were working for the C.W.A. and, at its peak, some 1500 earned C.W.A. paychecks. The C.W.A. did not hire everyone who wanted to work and it ceased to function on April 1, 1934. During its existence in the winter of 1933-34, however, it offered the unemployed of Fitchburg the work relief which the Emergency Relief Committee had been established to provide. The local relief committee continued to function on a minor scale until July 18, 1934, hiring the needy who did not qualify for other programs.

The local relief committee was active for a little over two years. During that time, it raised and spent almost \$114,000 for work relief projects. The committee found odd jobs for 570 and permanent employment for sixty individuals. In spite of these efforts, the city of Fitchburg still found it necessary to spend over a quarter of its income on general relief.²² It is difficult to determine the relative success of Fitchburg's efforts. While it is impossible to be sure if the Emergency Relief Committee did all that it could, Joanna Colcord's study of work relief projects during 1930-31 permits a limited amount of comparison with other cities. This study includes data on three smaller sized cities which funded their programs by private donations. Hamilton, Ohio, the city nearest to Fitchburg in size raised \$1.11 per capita for a seven month program. Trenton, New Jersey did even more poorly, obtaining only \$.91 per person for a six month project. Waterbury, Connecticut, on the other hand, raised \$5.73 per capita for a twelve month project. Any comparison is suspect in the absence of information on the extent and on the duration of unemployment in the other communities. Ignoring that, the \$1.27 per capita that Fitchburg raised for its first seven and a half month project seems credible. And unlike the more successful program in Waterbury, Fitchburg raised its money without resorting to the coercion of employees or to pressuring companies to match employee contributions.²³

During 1933, the depression intensified. There were 1623 families on general relief and, with dependents, this aspect of welfare alone aided 6,990 citizens of Fitchburg—a staggering 17.5 percent of the city population. Add to these people the 243 families of veterans who were given Soldiers' Relief, the 48 mothers with dependent children, and the more than 210 individuals who received either old age assistance or who resided at the City Infirmary, the new name for the poorhouse, and you have a huge proportion of the city out of work and with no means of support.²⁴ The duration of unemployment intensifies the severity of its impact on a community. The statistics taken from the Massachusetts Unemployment Census conducted by the C.W.A. indicate that only 5.3 percent of the citizens of Fitchburg seeking employment had been out of work for less

than two months while 68.3 percent had been unemployed for more than a year. Over half of the unemployed had been without work for more than two years and a shocking 17.5 percent reported that they had been unemployed for more than four years.²⁵ Fitchburg, in short, was cursed with massive, long-term unemployment in the early 1930s. Its citizens were not "between jobs" nor were they lazy. They were ready to work but nothing was available. The four cotton textile mills which closed their doors in the late 1920s never reopened. The nine machine shops which disappeared in the 1920s were not replaced before World War II either. Similarly, the notion that any community should and could care for its own indigent does not square with reality. Industrial unemployment was close to fifty percent and a great many of those working did so only a few days a week, particularly in the paper industry. We are our brother's keeper but if only half of a community is in a position to donate money, how can they possibly shoulder the burden of the other half.²⁶

The Emergency Relief Committee of Fitchburg engaged in a noble effort to alleviate the sufferings of the unemployed. It failed to solve the problem and was unable to satisfy even a half of the local needs. Fitchburg did not have the available funds to donate and all levels of government preached inaction. Both Mayor Carriere and Governor Joseph Ely believed in a "pay-as-you-go" system of strict economy and only necessary expenditures. President Herbert Hoover insisted that all relief should be organized alone and paid for by strictly local funds. All this would change once the New Deal became fully activated. The financial resources of the federal government, and especially the willingness of that government to use those resources, permitted large scale work relief projects under the C.W.A., the E.R.A., and later the W.P.A. Where the sustained campaign for funds by Fitchburg's Emergency Relief Committee netted only \$51,500 in 1931-32, the monthly payroll of the C.W.A. and the E.R.A. in Fitchburg was regularly \$45,000 to \$50,000. Only when funds of this magnitude were spent could the relief rolls be reduced and the massive unemployment problem be alleviated.



Mayor Carriere, photo courtesy of the Fitchburg Historical Society

NOTES

1. Herbert Hoover, *Memoirs: The Great Depression 1929-1941* (New York, 1952), 55; Albert U. Romasco, *The Poverty of Abundance: Hoover, the Nation, the Depression* (New York, 1965); and Arthur M Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Crisis of the Old Order 1919-1933* (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 173-74.
2. Press Release, December 8, 1924: Fitchburg (Mfg. 1923 No. 11), 2; and Doris Kirkpatrick, *Around the World in Fitchburg* (Fitchburg, 1975); Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Labor and Industries, *Census of Manufacturers, 1923, 1934*. Press Release, December 8, 1924 (Mfg. 1923 No. 11), 2; and Press Release, October, 1935 (Mfg. 1934 No. 10), 3.
3. *Ibid.*; and "Fitchburg," *Industry*, XXI (April 28, 1928), 25.
4. Fitchburg *Sentinel*, October 10 and October 23, 1931. Most of the *Sentinel* articles were clipped by an unknown individual and now reside in the Emergency Relief Committee of Fitchburg Scrapbook, Fitchburg Historical Society.
5. *Ibid.*, November 7 and 9, 1931. Fitchburg's committee was more "progressive" than most because it urged contributions on a sliding scale rather than a flat rate for all. See Schlesinger, *Crisis*, 172.
6. *Fitchburg City Documents* No. 56-59 (1928-31). See especially the Departments of Public Welfare and Soldiers' Relief.
7. *Sentinel*, November 7, 10, 12, 14, 17, and 20, 1931.
8. *Ibid.*, November 25, 1931.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, November 25, 27 and 28, 1931.
11. *Ibid.*, December 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 11, 1931.
12. *Ibid.*, December 16-19, 1931.
13. *Ibid.*, December 18, 28, and 29, 1931; Inaugural Address of Mayor Joseph N. Carriere, January 4, 1932, in *Fitchburg City Documents* No. 59 (1931), 14-15.
14. *Sentinel*, December 30, 1931, January 11, 15, 20, and 23, 1932.
15. *Fitchburg City Documents* No. 60 (1932), 8; *Sentinel*, January 22, February 2, 6, 17, March 3, and 5, 1932.
16. *Sentinel*, March 22 and June 16-17, 1931; Minutes of the Budget Committee of the Community Chest of Fitchburg, March 22-23, 1932, in United Way of North Central Massachusetts Archives, Fitchburg.

17. Budget Committee Minutes, 1932-33, Community Chest Scrapbook, 1932, both in United Way Archives.
18. Community Chest Scrapbook, 1934, in United Way Archives.
19. TLS of Norman Harrower to Thomas F. Howarth, March 31, 1933 and Budget Committee Minutes, March 28, 1933, in United Way Archives.
20. Budget Committee Minutes, 1933; *Sentinel*, September 30, October 5, 7, 10, 11, 14, 17-18, 25, 1933.
21. *Sentinel*, November 11, 20-24, 27, December 5, 11, 13, 1933; and January 22, 1934.
22. Budget Committee Minutes, December 14, 1933, January 8, 1935, in United Way Archives.
23. Report of Emergency Relief Committee of Fitchburg, July, 1934, in Fitchburg Historical Society files. Joanna C. Colcord *et al.*, *Emergency Work Relief as carried out in 26 American Communities, 1930-31, . . .* (New York, 1932), 24-25, 215-16.
24. *Fitchburg City Documents* No. 61 (1933), *passim*.
25. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Labor and Industries, *Report on the Census of Unemployed in Massachusetts as of January 2, 1934*, 116, 180. Fitchburg's duration of unemployment was only slightly longer than the national average. See Francis Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare* (New York, 1971), 81.
26. *Fitchburg City Documents* No. 61 (1933), 322.